

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A continuous method for rinsing a cleaned object, which has been cleaned with a cleaning chemical liquid having acidity or alkalinity, comprising the steps of:

immersing the object in a rinse bath filled therein with pure water;

continuously feeding pure water to the rinse bath so as to rinse off the cleaning chemical liquid from a surface of the object;

adding a neutralizing chemical liquid, which has alkalinity or acidity opposite to that of the cleaning chemical liquid, to the pure water in the rinse bath after a predetermined period of time from the start of feeding of the pure water to the rinse bath has elapsed and during saidthe continuous feeding of saidthe pure water to saidthe rinse bath thereby producing a salt by neutralizing saidthe cleaning chemical liquid with saidthe neutralizing chemical liquid; and

continuously overflowing saidthe rinse bath thereby discharging the residual pure water and saidthe salt from saidthe rinse bath.

2. (original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the neutralizing chemical liquid is emitted together with the pure water toward the cleaned object in the rinse bath.

3. (canceled).

4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaning chemical liquid is one of a sulfuric acid-hydrogen peroxide mixture and a hydrochloric acid-hydrogen peroxide mixture and the neutralizing chemical liquid is an aqueous ammonia solution.

6. (original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaning chemical liquid is an ammonia-hydrogen peroxide mixture and the neutralizing chemical liquid is sulfuric acid.

7. (original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaned object is selected from the group consisting of a semiconductor wafer, a silicon wafer and glass components for liquid crystal displays.

8. (currently amended) A continuous method for rinsing a cleaned object which has previously been cleaned with a cleaning chemical having acidity or alkalinity, comprising the steps of:

immersing ~~said~~the cleaned object in a rinse bath containing pure water;

continuously feeding pure water to ~~said~~the rinse bath so as to rinse off residual cleaning chemical from a surface of ~~said~~the cleaned object;

adding a neutralizing chemical which has alkalinity or acidity opposite to that of the cleaning chemical to ~~said~~the pure water in ~~said~~the rinse bath after a predetermined period of time from the start of rinsing by feeding of the pure water to the rinse bath has elapsed; reacting ~~said~~the neutralizing chemical and ~~said~~the residual cleaning chemical to form a salt; continuously overflowing the rinse bath to discharge residual pure water, neutralizing chemical and salt; and removing ~~said~~the object from ~~said~~the rinse bath, ~~said~~the rinsing process being conducted using a single immersion step.

9. (canceled).

10. (canceled).

11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended) The method as defined in claim 8 wherein the cleaning chemical is a sulfuric acid-hydrogen peroxide mixture or a hydrochloric acid-hydrogen peroxide mixture and wherein ~~said~~the neutralizing chemical is an aqueous ammonia solution.

13. (new) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein a resistivity of the pure water in the rinse bath is measured to determine whether the resistivity is restored to a predetermined level to thereby determine the completion of rinsing.

14. (new) The method as defined in claim 13, wherein the predetermined level of the resistivity is set to be 10 MΩ.cm.

15. (new) The method as defined in claim 12, wherein the cleaned object is a semiconductor wafer.

16. (new) The method as defined in claim 12, wherein the cleaned object is a glass component for a liquid crystal display.